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optional?**
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IECA⁺

INSIGHTS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE INDEPENDENT EDUCATIONAL CONSULTANTS ASSOCIATION



Calendar

August 14

Webinar: Helping Your Students
With LD Become Super Testers

September 11

Webinar: Gender Today: Best
Practice for Working With Trans
and Non-Binary Youth

September 26

Transitioning to Private Practice
Workshop

September 27-29

NACAC, Salt Lake City, UT

October 9

Webinar: Procrastination!
Missed Deadlines!

November 5-7

Pre-Conference Tours,
Los Angeles

November 7

Pre-Conference Workshops,
Los Angeles

November 7-9

IECA Fall Conference,
Los Angeles

November 9

Post-Conference Tours,
Los Angeles

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August/September 2018

Head West for Golden Learning Opportunities

By Mark Sklarow, IECA CEO



In the 1800s,
mining,
farming, and
ranching
drove the
migration to
California.

Early in the

1900s, both Hollywood and Pacific
trading drove the population
growth. In the mid-1900s, Lucy and
Ricky Ricardo, along with Ethel and
Fred, drove to Southern California
and led a mass migration as *I Love
Lucy* viewers followed them west.

And by the year 2000, California was host to more
IECA members than any other state. And so, for its
warm weather, tech-driven workforce, and plethora
of schools and colleges, IECA heads to the Golden
State for our 2018 Fall Conference.

From midday Wednesday to midday Friday, IECA
will host up to 1,500 attendees, including an
estimated 500 IECs. With more than 60 educational
sessions, major speakers, discussion events,
demonstrations of services and goods, networking
between IECs and admission deans and directors,
and much more, the event promises to offer
participants things to do from morning to night.
You may need your Vita-meat-a-vega-min to keep
up! And don't forget that Wednesday morning has
five pre-conference workshops with something for
everyone! (See page 3 for more details.)

Although they are only a year old, the ACE talks
have become a favorite part of the conference
and will be included in the opening session on



Wednesday afternoon. These 20-minute, TED
Talks-like presentations will tackle **A**dolescents,
Consulting, and **E**ducation. You'll hear Jean M.
Twenge, professor at SDSU, share her insights
about iGen, the first students to have spent their
entire adolescence with smart phones; Paul
Kanarek, managing partner at Collegewise, discuss
the future of educational consulting; and Hiram
Chodosh, president of Claremont McKenna College,
share his thoughts about preparing today's students
to be leaders who will answer JFK's call to think
about what they can do for others.

On Friday morning, attendees have an array
of options and may have a hard time choosing
between two other well-known speakers and
several events and sessions! The Master Class
presenter, Daniel J. Siegel, MD, is among the
most widely respected experts in adolescent
neurobiology, having written several bestsellers,
including *Brainstorm: The Power and Purpose of*

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President's Letter

Education and Training: A Challenge to Serve

The 2018–2019 IECA Board of Directors hit the ground running, and I am delighted to report that the Education & Training Committee is off to a great start under the excellent leadership of **Allison Matlack** (MA), vice president.

Surveying the offerings. With the assistance of **Valerie Vasquez-Guzman**, IECA manager of Education, the committee has begun to survey and evaluate the educational opportunities in all specialties that were available to members during the past three years, including offerings at conferences, STI, webinars, regional groups, and so on. Their objective is to identify gaps in training as well as redundancies that can be eliminated to focus efforts in new areas. The goal is to establish a three-year plan for IECA educational training initiatives.

New areas. A subcommittee has been established under the leadership of **Susan Dabbar** (DC) to examine potential opportunities for regional groups, which can be specifically targeted to meet the needs of each geographic area and tailored for its constituencies. That could open up a whole new range of educational possibilities.

We are also happy to announce that the committee has been working diligently on the mentoring webinar, and it will be ready to launch very soon. The webinar will provide information to potential mentors and to mentees about the elements and benefits of the mentoring process and reassure potential mentors that the process will not take an inordinate amount of time.



Barbara Pasalis

Participation. As the Education & Training Committee works to increase and reinvigorate offerings for all members, we must remember that committees cannot work in a vacuum. For the educational programs to be valuable, members must take advantage of them. Just as we counsel our students about the importance of engagement in their school communities, we will derive greater benefit from the Association's services the more we participate.

Jeff Levy (CA) and **Jennie Kent** (Colombia) have volunteered to host a monthly Virtual Roundtable via Zoom for Associate and

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IECA⁺ INSIGHTS

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only), and Twitter (@IECA).

In Focus

Los Angeles Conference by the Numbers

- 1 Master Class
- 1 Special Address
- 3 ACE Speakers
- 5 Pre-Conference Workshops
- 12 Pre- and Post-Conference School and Program Tours
- 14 Colleges in Friday's Showcase
- 16 Discussion Topics
- 18 Pre- and Post-Conference College Tours
- 30+ Exhibitors in Conference Central
- 55 Breakout Sessions

Sneak Peek! Don't Miss These Pre-Cons

What's behind the pre-con curtain at the IECA Fall Conference in Los Angeles? It's a great fall lineup with timely themes and a cast of characters that will keep you engaged and expand your knowledge!

- **How a University's Financial Aid Committee Works: A Trek in Their Shoes**

Find out what goes on in a college financial aid committee and experience the process yourself as you handle a case study.

Christine Bowman, Southwestern University; **Cyndy McDonald**, IECA; and **Diane Cashion**, IECA

- **Advanced Testing: Recognizing and Understanding Complex Learning Profiles**

Ever been baffled by advanced testing results, wondering how to understand comorbidity? That's on the schedule.

Caryl Frankenberger, IECA

- **Marketing for the Introverted**

Can you be an introvert and market yourself effectively while staying in your comfort zone? Yes—and we'll discover how!

Mark Sklarow, IECA

- **So the Top 50 USNWR Is Your Student's College List?! Advising Asian Families While Maintaining Your Sanity**

If you advise Asian students, you won't want to miss a candid panel discussion about how to advise families with unreasonably high expectations for their children's prospects. Facilitated by **Patricia O'Keefe**, IECA, and **Lloyd Paradiso**, IECA

- **Upskill Your Essay Review**

You can't write your students' essays for them, but there are ways to ensure that you give them the best support and advice. Look forward to a hands-on review of the best techniques and a visit from **Ethan Sawyer**, IECA.

Brad Schiller, Prompt, and **Mamie Consentino**, Collegewise



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Head West, from page 1

the *Teenage Brain*. Others may want to hear Richard Shaw, dean of admission and financial aid at Stanford, discuss the state of college admissions for 2018, specifically the challenge of providing equity, access, and opportunity.

Of course, discussion topics and breakout sessions dominate much of the three days, along with networking events and the School and College Fair on Thursday and the Therapeutic Information Swap and the College Showcase on Friday.

Members will have the option of a members-only dinner on Tuesday, always a highlight and one that often sells out! All attendees are invited to join us for Thursday evening's reception, where the wine probably was not personally made by Lucy stomping on the grapes—but who knows for sure?

Things will start early and end late, as campus tours for colleges and universities, as well as schools and programs, have been planned for both pre- and post-conference. Recognizing that East Coast participants will likely fly out Saturday, we have scheduled college tours for Friday afternoon immediately after the conference closes. The IECA website includes a full listing of tour options: link.IECAonline.com/Conference-Tours. 

President's Letter, from page 2

Student members. Thirty members participated in the first webinar, which was held in June. The goal is to provide a place for newer members to connect with peers, find members who share common interests, discuss issues of concern, and build a network of colleagues.

A Challenge for the Membership

I challenge every member to follow Jeff and Jennie's example and to contribute in just one way between now and the end of the year. Join a regional or affinity group; contact committee chairs and suggest ideas for conference sessions, program tours, or webinars; become a mentor; team up with colleagues and plan a conference session you feel will be valuable for the membership; invite experts in their field to present at a regional group, develop a webinar, or partner with someone to present a conference educational session; or write an article for *Insights*.

The input and participation of all members is crucial to developing programs that are relevant for all members. Members often ask how they can become involved in leadership in IECA—leadership begins with volunteering to serve. So share your time and talents and help the committees and the board ensure that IECA continues to be a membership association that serves *your* needs.

Barbara Pasalis
IECA President

Solving the College Admissions Process Problem

by Jennifer Ann Aquino, IECA (Singapore)



Mutter the words *university* and *admissions* and you'll feel stress around you—verbal, visceral, corporeal, mental. Have you ever seen a student or a parent get really excited about the process? That's a problem: because they should. And, that's where we—as a society—have to take responsibility: both for what it does to our students and families currently and for how we need to change it.

The actual “university admissions process,” which sometimes takes students and families years to go through, is now seen as a pandemic, not just in our society but globally, affecting young adults so deeply that we are now reading about teen depression, suicide, and anxiety regularly. What's going on and how can we change both the causes and the effects?

Rankings do harm, not good. Human beings love any sort of ranking; it helps us deduce the subjective and complex into a clean, neat, and tidy package. But does a top ranking guarantee happiness for the student? A great career? Success? A lifetime network? No. Yet society still embraces rankings to the detriment of our students. It's the quick-and-easy approach to guiding our young adults to their next stage in life, and it is false. Rankings mean nothing to a student's success and happiness. Let's help them understand that.

I asked one of my juniors the other day why he didn't like X university; I had put it on his long-list of universities to research

because I thought it would be a great fit. “Doesn't have a good ranking,” was his response. I asked which ranking he referred to and did he understand the metrics of the ranking before making his conclusion. He couldn't remember the ranking, and the metrics question got me a deer-in-headlights look. We have failed young adults (and their parents) with this, folks. Pure and simple.



Mental health is affected. You don't have to be a rocket scientist to connect the rising rates of suicide, depression, isolationism, and anxiety to the university admissions process. Sure, there are other factors in the mix; but the admissions process is big business and that “bigness” infiltrates the lives of young adults from very young. “Where do you want to go to college?” an elder asks a 12-year-old. Like he would know. Like he *should* know. Still, we ask. Shame on us. A better question would be, “What do you enjoy doing?” or “Tell me about yourself.” I find my students are rarely asked those questions. And when they are, they struggle at first to answer them. Yet these are the very questions whose answers would lead to a more genuine, realistic, and “fit-based” approach to the whole “Where do you want to go to university?” question.

Students think they need to be someone else for college applications. As students enter into the process—thinking about extracurriculars, community service, which courses to take, getting a job, and so on—their development runs the risk of regression unless they have a mentor, parent or teacher who can catch them in time. They focus on needing rigorous courses, awards, sports victories, internships, and the like, not on their own individual and unique strengths.

Instead of telling them how they should be, let's start with learning who they are. As the student develops through secondary school, we should be continually asking the questions, “What do you enjoy?” “What would be a risk for you?” “What's your limit?” “What are you afraid of trying only because you think you'll fail?” “What will make you happy?” and helping them to develop a better sense of self as they choose the different activities, courses, and jobs that are an option to them and aligned with who they are.

And as anyone in admissions would know, that self-awareness ultimately leads to a more powerful application in the end—the student will embrace who he or she is, understand better what

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continued on page 7



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“fit” actually means, and be able to articulate those things more effectively. It took me a full year with a student for him to come around and accept the fact that he wasn’t competitive by nature (I want a lot of competition at university!), was intimidated by intensity in the classroom (I need a lot of rigor!), and would be comfortable on a smaller campus (I want a big name university!). He came to see me over the holiday on break from his small liberal arts college in Minnesota. He’s a flourishing young man, confident, articulate, and happier than I have ever seen him before.

What Can We Do?

A lot of people are already doing a lot of important things. Fairtest.org; *Turning the Tide: Inspiring Concern for Others and the Common Good through College Admissions*, a publication by Harvard’s Graduate School of Education; and the launch of the Institute on Character and Admission are action steps that are helping. But because the university admissions process is not isolated—it permeates the entire career of a high school student—we need the message to come from within society, not just from those in admissions, for it to have an impact on the health and well-being of young adults. Here are a few ways to make that happen:

Start self-assessment right away. High schools can implement simple self-assessment workshops starting from grade 9 and progressing through senior year to help students not only figure out who they are but also learn to embrace their uniqueness: to be who they are and know that it is, in and of itself, outstanding. Parents should also be involved—whether it’s with biannual seminars or keeping them in check with what’s going on and why—to give them the chance to learn about their own child and that their uniqueness is greatness.

Keep teaching. Knowledge is power. We—schools and IECs—must educate our communities on life beyond high school—whether it be college or gap years or work or trade—with case studies and lots of time for feedback and Q&A from parents and students. Help them understand why rankings won’t help them. Help them to understand what “fit” really implies when we’re talking about not just college applications but also life in general. We all know what it’s like to go to a job that first day knowing full well that this is not a great fit.

Talk to young adults. Ask them about themselves. Ask them their opinion. Ask them what motivates them. What doesn’t. Show them that you’re interested and also show them that there is no right answer, only the one that’s true to who they are. Encourage them to be genuine. Talk to them about happiness and what that means in life. Give them ideas for life choices, from post-high school years to careers to lifestyle choices. These human beings have been on the planet for some short 15, 16, 17, maybe 18 years! How would they have any idea what’s out there beyond? It’s our responsibility to show them and guide them.

This is all about incorporating the entire community in supporting our young adults. That’s not a new concept, but its elements have changed over the years and we’ve reached a tipping point. It’s no surprise that a course called Happiness is the most popular course ever offered at Yale. Young adults are seeking it, and they’re not feeling it. That should cause alarm. Let’s sound the bells. 🚨

Jennifer Aquino can be reached at jennifer@jenniferannaquino.com



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Helping Parents “Get Real” About College Admissions

Tina Tranfaglia, MBA, IECA (IL)



Imagine yourself in your first meeting with a brand-new client family when suddenly the parents present you with their own school list, ripped straight from the most recent top 10 rankings by *U.S. News & World Report*. They beam with pride, as if extensive research has led them to this unique combination of schools, while your heart sinks at the prospect

of how hard you will have to work to help them adopt more realistic expectations. We all know what these parents fail to understand—even if the student is eminently qualified, this is an ill-advised college list because of its lack of range.

Our clients’ misinformation about the admissions process can lead to unrealistic expectations in many situations at all academic levels. Consider, for example, students who might be:

- Academically strong, but deficient in other qualifications important to a holistic review process, such as light/no extracurricular activities, worrisome personal qualities that will be revealed through recommendations or interviews, insufficient academic rigor, or no real uniqueness. (In those cases, I often suggest we populate the list more heavily with colleges that don’t practice holistic admissions.)
- An excellent standardized test taker, with scores that outpace his grades. (I feel sorry for these kids because colleges foster unrealistic expectations by marketing to them. My strategy here is to “equivalize” the ACT/SAT score to the GPA and search around that new calculated score.)
- Underqualified all around for his or her dream schools, but the family believes intense interest, participation in a college’s summer program, minimal legacy, or willingness to apply ED will overcome any deficits.
- Interested in the most highly-selective programs within already-reach universities or in super-selective Direct Medical programs.
- An average athlete whom the family expects to be recruited to a Division 1 school with a scholarship. (Regardless of the athlete’s prowess, I run parallel paths for recruiting and for nonrecruiting until there is a firm recruiting offer.)
- A below-average student whom the family expects to win merit scholarships.

So how do you get families to understand the realities of college admissions today and adjust their expectations, sometimes bursting lifelong dreams? I often find that my students are better calibrated than their parents because they are familiar with the results of the graduating classes ahead of them and they have browsed Naviance statistics. In fact, they often fear they will get in nowhere except community college, while their parents greatly overestimate their child’s candidacy.

Arm Them With Facts

Associate member **Cheryl Chamberlain** (IL) starts to ground parents by “stressing the general landscape of today’s college admissions

process and how it differs from the process they may have experienced.” I find this to be particularly helpful for those families who were educated abroad in systems where grades and scores were, in fact, the ultimate determinant of admissions.

Because I work with many high-achieving students, each year I create an extensive chart of admissions stats for 14 of the most selective US universities to which many

of my students aspire. It shows that there were approximately 500,000 applications for 37,000 admissions offers—and that’s before subtracting slots going to international students, recruited athletes, “super legacies,” and students who receive multiple offers from this set of schools. The final result is that only about 21,000 slots are available to their talented but “unconnected” domestic student. According to the US Department of Education, there are almost 40,000 public and private high schools in the United States. If these colleges only accepted valedictorians, almost half would still get denied.

I often supplement this sobering analysis with anecdotes about my own students who did and did not gain admission to this pool of colleges, emphasizing the myriad factors involved in holistic admissions, that admission is never guaranteed at elite universities, and why a college list must have range.

Finally, I walk them through Naviance Scattergrams for information specific to their high school. Although Naviance is one of the best tools we have, it has limitations. For example:

- It combines at least three years of data in this rapidly-changing environment, which is why Associate member **Lelaine Paik** (IL) advises her students to strive for the top half of the admitted range in grades and scores



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- It doesn't show which college or program within a university the student applied to, what other credentials they may have, or the course rigor that made up the GPA
- It contains self-reported student data and the average GPAs and ACT/SAT scores, which the students focus on, are influenced by outliers (such as recruited athletes and legacies) and whoever happened to apply.

Vita Cohen (IL) uses similar techniques to “depersonalize the situation.” “Presenting the family with such unbiased facts, which might also include College Planner Pro school profiles and IECA's flyer, *What Colleges Look for in High School Students*, makes my explanation not about their kid and not about my own opinion,” she explained. Our colleagues at Ravinia College Consulting find that pointing out the sheer magnitude of students rejected by selective universities—more than 80% of whom are qualified for admission—can help reset expectations. Meanwhile, **Wendy Kahn** (IL) finds that focusing on the low admissions rates at selective universities often works better than pointing out mid-range scores and GPAs because the client may possess the requisite stats but still not be offered admission.

Explore the Students' Interests and Soft Skills

Directing questions to the student often reveals that students and parents are misaligned, with the unrealistic expectations reflecting the parents' dreams. I explore whether the student would be more

comfortable as a “big fish” or whether he or she would feel confident even in the bottom half of the class academically. I ask how he or she feels about doing an admissions interview, if required. I explore the students' academic interests, often finding they want a major that is not even offered at the schools their parents selected. If the student is interested in medical school later, I make sure he or she knows that most medical schools nowadays focus on high grades over the institution the grades came from. Finally, once the families understand that selective colleges are looking for a “hook” beyond the grades and scores, we discuss possible hooks that the student may have to differentiate him or her in the applicant pool. Through these discussions, students often initiate broadening the school list beyond their parents' unrealistic suggestions.

Explain the Tradeoffs

With the ever-increasing need to apply ED or REA, clients must understand that they are making tradeoffs if they select an ultra-competitive school for their early choice, especially if they select one that uses Restrictive Early Action. **Mark Cruver** (GA) calls this strategy discussion his “Come-to-Jesus” moment with students. Simply on the basis of acceptance rates, such schools are reach options for even the most highly-qualified students. Although applicants gain an admissions advantage at one school, they lose it at their more likely options. If the student is actually underqualified for these schools, I try harder to get the family to apply ED to a more targeted option, which may become a reach in a later cycle. Most colleagues I surveyed confirmed that they categorize colleges with acceptance rates under 15–20% as reach for all students.

Focus on the Fit

As families start to understand this treacherous landscape and the gap between *admissible* and *admitted*, I focus their attention away from brand names and toward best-fit options. **Lisa Temkin** (IL) does the same, encouraging families to “come to the process with an open mind, with no preconceived notions, and to be good consumers who shop around for what they want and need.” Beyond the reputation and obvious fit-factors, students should consider longer-term goals and how their college choices will enable those, the focus on undergraduate teaching (which some of the most selective universities are not known for), the competitiveness of the environment, and specialized programs that may actually be better at a lesser-known university.

In the end, of course, having a college list with good-fit options in a range of selectivity will produce the best results. Every now and again, I encounter families who obsess over that outlier on Naviance, swear they know someone with low scores or grades who got into Impossible U during ED, or remain convinced that their kid with a 35 ACT and a 3.0 GPA has a shot. So I let the scenarios play out in real time because I have failed at convincing them otherwise. According to Big Future, only 61 four-year colleges and universities have an acceptance rate of < 25% (likely 2017 data), so there is clearly a place for every student who is willing to have an open mind about college options. 🏃

Tina Tranfaglia, College Knowledge Admissions Consulting, can be reached at cmtranfaglia@gmail.com.

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Testing Strategies for Students With LD or ADHD

By Jenn Cohen, Launch Pad Education



Independent educational consultants (IECs) field frequent questions from students and families about choosing the right college admissions exam or whether to take one at all, when to take the test, and how to find great test prep. For the majority of students, those questions might have easy, predictable answers: Yes, of course, you'll take the test.

Use a short diagnostic to answer the SAT vs ACT question. Wait till spring of junior year to even think about prep. Call a reliable local test prep company for classes. Done!

But for students with learning differences (LD) or ADHD, the answers are not that straightforward. Test optional schools might be introduced in the discussion very early. Short diagnostic tools don't come close to reflecting the realities of testing with accommodations and, of course, applications for accommodations must be submitted. Test prep might need to start six months or even earlier before taking the test. And traditional prep courses could be a total waste of time and money. Different students call for a different approach!

Test Optional, Yes or No?

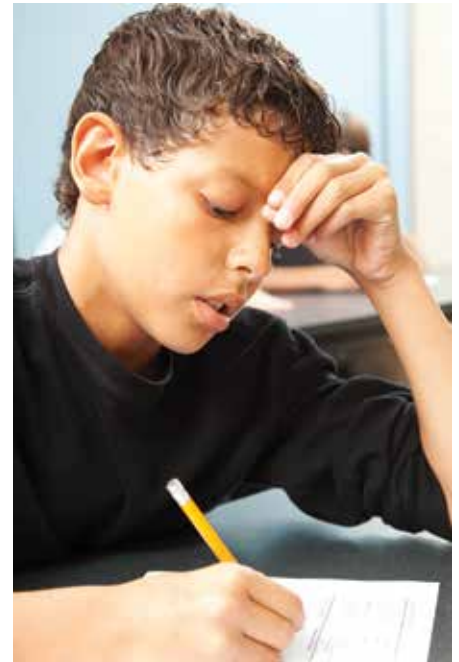
Test optional schools can provide more choices for students, although IECs should resist the urge to push students in that

direction at the outset. Students with LD and ADHD have enough people underestimating them! These students can—and do—achieve great scores. On the other hand, don't let families or the students themselves give up on testing.

After years of struggle, many students genuinely believe they are "bad test takers." But there is no such thing! Bad test takers are generally just unprepared test takers

who are poor judges of how much they know and don't know. But with the right instruction and commitment to preparation, those students can succeed. Strong scores open students to more schools

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that are a good fit, not to mention potentially qualifying them for scholarships. It's almost always worth a try.

Which test should a student take? Families often ask if their students should take the test "cold" to get a baseline. For LD/ADHD students, the answer is definitely NO. The scores will without exception be lower than a student's capability. That's why test prep exists, right? LD/ADHD students will almost certainly get discouraged and feel like the test is just too hard. They already experience a lot of anxiety about test taking, and a bad score will just fulfill their fears. Instead, have your students try full, timed practice tests, allowing them any accommodations they have been awarded. It's less pressure, and it gives your test prep professional a baseline score to help assess where to focus going forward.

Accommodations play a role in the choice, too, and accommodations approval may be the deciding factor for many students. IECs should note that until recently, the ACT was very often the better choice for LD/ADHD students given its very flexible administration procedures. Beginning with the September 2018 test date, however, those procedures are changing. Specifically, students taking the ACT with 150% time accommodations on the national test dates will no longer have flexibility in allotting time to each subtest section (procedures are not changing for school based/special testing). The SAT may now become a more attractive option with its more generous time limits. But a practice test is the fail-safe route to make a smart choice.

When should LD/ADHD students start preparation, and when should they take the test? The common wisdom has always been that spring of junior year is the ideal time for most students. However, LD/ADHD students may need a longer "runway" for preparation. Learning new strategies and content takes longer for obvious reasons, but further, those students may need a relaxed pace to avoid stoking anxiety. Eight-week classes or weekend crash courses are not likely to improve scores. They will only make underprepared students think they're prepared, which leads to disappointing scores and more evidence to fuel the bad test taker myth. Most LD/ADHD students should begin around 4–6 months before the test date, though some may need a year or more of lead time.

As for when to try it, waiting until the end of junior year can backfire. Many LD/ADHD students want to procrastinate because the process is stressful or scary, but that makes it harder! Those students may need to start earlier—often fall or winter of junior year test dates—to give them plenty of time for retakes. Limiting remaining test dates only increases the pressure. Knowing that there are plenty of opportunities to take the test again is an instant stress reliever.

How do I find the right prep? Students with LD and ADHD need professional teachers and tutors who understand learning differences and are confident enough in their skills to be able to adapt their approach as needed. One-size most definitely does not fit all. Inexperienced teachers may do more harm than good. Online

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video courses are generally a poor choice for these students, too, especially if they struggle with motivation or attention. One-on-one attention matters.

Here are a few things to look for:

- Full-time tutors or full-time teachers who tutor on the side. Classes will not be as effective or efficient for most of these students. A great tutor can do more in a few hours of individual work than a class can do in 30 hours of undifferentiated instruction. Specific work experience or education in learning differences is a huge plus.

A great tutor can do more in a few hours of individual work than a class can do in 30 hours of undifferentiated instruction.

- Use of official, standardized SAT or ACT materials for practice whenever possible. Third-party materials can't be trusted for accurate scoring, and their questions are often confusing or unlike actual test questions.
- Flexible curriculum is a must. LD/ADHD students don't need to waste their precious time on test content that they don't need. Tutors also need to have the freedom and ability to adapt strategies to an individual's needs and goals.
- Reasonable expectations for hours spent working with the tutor and doing homework. LD/ADHD students already spend more time than most on getting regular schoolwork done. They don't have time to spend 10 hours a week on prep.
- Experience dealing with test anxiety. Most LD/ADHD students have some level of test anxiety from years of disappointing scores. This is especially true for students who received a diagnosis relatively late (middle school or later). They need specific instruction on how to combat test-day stress.
- Ability to teach students evidence-based study skills and note taking. Most students, LD/ADHD or not, are lacking in this department. No amount of instruction will help if a student doesn't really learn the material. Study skills build confidence, too, because the students become true experts who know exactly what they know and don't know! Even better, those skills will take them much farther than just the SAT/ACT.

Overall, just remember that you have the ability to use your unique talents to find the right college fit for these students. Giving them terrific advice is what you do! Use those powers to guide them and you'll be rewarded with great results. 🚀

Jenn Cohen can be reached at jenn@launchededucation.com.



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Will the Future Be Test-Optional?

Pamela Kwartler, MA, IECA (NJ)



The University of Chicago's recent decision to stop requiring the submission of standardized test scores sent a powerful message to the education community. The university joins the large group of highly competitive test-optional schools, including Bowdoin College, Bates College, Wesleyan University, Wake Forest University, and Smith College, in its commitment to evaluate students on GPA, rigor of curriculum, essays, letters of recommendation, and strength of the school.

It's worth noting that UChicago is also driven to "expand financial aid, scholarships" and to "increase accessibility," calling the policy, The UChicago Empower Initiative, as reported in *UChicago News* in June 2018. The purpose of the move is twofold: to reshape the admissions process and to grow the population of underrepresented students. The university's action declares that standardized tests do not serve admissions officers or students, and with Schaeffer at fairtest.org reporting that more than 1,000 other colleges are taking similar action, that well-researched belief can no longer be viewed as a rogue concept. Because so many colleges continue to adopt test-optional policies, how can we assess the value of standardized tests to colleges that continue to use them as criteria for admissions and for the students who choose to take them?

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Why Test?

Currently, students must submit standardized test scores to most US colleges and nearly every college accepts them. Other than because testing is a cornerstone of a long-established system, why do colleges require them? One answer is the premise that all applicants, regardless of the nation or state in which they live, are measured by a common assessment. Beyond that, the reasons can be murky: a high GPA with a low test score can indicate a strong student who tests poorly, but it can also point to grade inflation in a particular high school (more about this later). The reverse, a low GPA with a high test score, might convince an admissions officer that a student has stronger cognitive ability than indicated by the GPA, especially in a challenging high school, but it could just as easily point to a lack of motivation and subsequent unpreparedness for college rigor.



But colleges have a bigger reason to insist on testing. If the goal of colleges is to attract the most applications and have the highest yield, standardized tests scores provide the key. Rankings, the *US News and World Report* rankings in particular, drive business for many schools. When the 25th/75th percentile test scores of a college rise, the public perception is that admission to that school is more desirable. The impact of the *US News* college rankings is as undeniable as it is illogical. Many schools with lower rankings offer students the same advantages as the highest-ranked college—that is, they offer everything except the *name*. The brand name of a college is secured—and assured worldwide visibility—by standardized test scores. So colleges and the College Board and ACT organizations that produce the tests are the clear winners.

Do Students Benefit?

Other than anxiety, what do students win in this game? The top 1.25% of PSAT test takers earn a \$2,500 National Merit award. Those students become eligible for corporate-sponsored scholarships as well as awards from \$2,000 to a full ride at some colleges. Sixteen colleges offer automatic scholarships of varying amounts for students with high SAT/ACT scores. But most students do not fit into those groups and focus less on scholarships than on taking on the test as a mandatory part of the college process. When students most need to

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concentrate on their high school courses and extracurriculars, testing is an inescapable source of stress for at least six months—and more commonly, over a year.

Should we encourage students to opt out? Although it's possible to create an entire list of test-optional schools, that strategy would lock a student out of many options. Despite evidence from those who oppose testing, some recent research supports the value of testing in admissions decisions, particularly with regard to being prepared for college and identifying grade inflation.

Sackett, Kuncel, and Beatty's 2012 study of a group of 150,000 students from 110 colleges found that the SAT scores predicted freshman performance as well as GPA and that both factors considered together were the best predictor of performance. And Mayer (2014), a professor of psychology at the University of New Hampshire, said "the fact that the SAT can, during a morning's testing, help predict [freshman success] is, to me, an astonishing achievement that cannot be ignored."

Do Tests Identify Grade Inflation?

But even the research in support of testing doesn't deny that we should look at test scores in conjunction with GPA and other factors to comprehensively evaluate a student. Do SAT/ACT scores provide balance and clarity in the case of an inflated GPA? Unfortunately, high test scores and grade inflation often go together. Researchers found inflated grades most prevalent in affluent suburban high schools.

Jaschik (2017) cited a 2017 study "Grade Inflation and the Role of Standardized Testing" by Hurwitz and Lee that found the average GPA in such districts rose from 3.27 to 3.38 from 1998 to 2016. The highest average GPA for such a district was 3.56. The average GPA for lower income students at largely minority high schools was only 3.14.

Growing diversity is a priority to most colleges, whether test scores are an admissions factor or not. Schools need to reach out to minority students and present a test-optional policy as an impetus for them to apply and have the chance to be admitted.

Those results suggest that wealthier students with high grades and test scores may be strong students, but they are also often the beneficiaries of family support. Involved, educated parents with greater means can spend time and money to provide tutoring, test prep, and guidance to their children. Those students also retake the test more frequently than minority students, many of whom take one standardized test in the fall of senior year. Fee waivers offset the cost, but busy families inexperienced with testing may be less capable of advising their children about testing strategies. Again, higher income students have an edge.

Do Tests Affect Minority Applicants?

Growing diversity is a priority to most colleges, whether test scores are an admissions factor or not. Schools need to reach out to minority students and present a test-optional policy as an impetus for them to apply and have the chance to be admitted. Do test optional colleges actually accept more underserved students? One study, "Measuring Success: Testing, Grades, and the Future of College Admissions" by College Board researchers Buckley, Letukas, and Wildavsky, concluded that they do not. Sackett, Kuncel, and Beatty (2012) determined that the SAT was indeed a predictor of success and that the reason that low income students are not admitted to college is because they do not enter the admissions process. They found that "the SES of enrolled students was very similar to that of specific schools' applicant pools, which suggests that the barrier to college for low-SES students in the United States is a lower rate of entering the college admissions process, rather than exclusion on the part of colleges" (abstract). But most sources for that study are over 10 years old and may be influenced by the authors' conflict of interest.

In discussing the conclusions drawn from *Defining Access: How Test-Optional Works*, a 2018 NACAC study, Jaschik (2018) wrote, "While the degrees varied, institutions that went test optional saw gains in the numbers of black and Latino students applying and being admitted to their institutions." The NACAC study presented data that combined three groups: first generation

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students, a low socioeconomic group (Pell recipients), and other underrepresented populations. One quarter of those students did not submit scores, and a lower number of those students were accepted by colleges. However, a large percentage of nonsubmitters enrolled and graduated at the same rate as those who submitted test scores.

The NACAC study stated: “We do continue to question whether the value-add of testing is large enough to justify the price—time spent, financial cost, and emotional drain—being paid by students due to societal preoccupation with those tests” (p. 4). Although the study focused on a specific demographic, that final statement rings true for all students. In sum, the data support the position that students who do not submit test scores perform college level work as well as those who submit them, regardless of race or socioeconomic background. But despite studies that attempt to prove otherwise, we cannot pinpoint how colleges use test results to predict if students will integrate and graduate.

The SAT and ACT will not disappear anytime soon. Colleges, the College Board, and ACT are thriving businesses, ensconced in the culture. The test prep industry underpins them. Test-optional colleges share in the bounty too; more applications result in more rejections thus lower acceptance rates, and when only top scorers submit their scores, it raises the school’s numbers in the rankings. Those of us with faith in the test-optional model can look to the University of Chicago’s clear directive about their new policy. Going forward, let’s work to create a more equitable playing field where mastery in classes, authentic essays, and enthusiastic recommendations are the ultimate predictors of college success—not test scores, which are often boosted by socioeconomic standing. 

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Semester Schools Offer Immersive Learning

By Holly McGlennon Treat, MEd, IECA (CT)



Imagine being a high school student engaged in real-world research to determine the effect of lionfish on juvenile snappers and mangrove nurseries in the Bahamas. Or picture yourself attending a weekly meeting with nonpartisan policy experts in Washington, DC, to develop a brief to present to legislators. Or maybe fulfilling your honors-level academic course

requirements while undertaking wilderness trips in the Appalachian Mountains or investigating how to make fuel from plastics and presenting the results in a symposium attended by scientists and government officials. Those are the kinds of opportunities offered by semester schools that your clients could experience.

Semester school programs offer a semester's worth of rigorous academics, including AP classes, embedded in curricula that translate traditional school subjects into place-based, experiential learning. The Semester Schools Network (<http://semesterschools.net>) is a group of 13 schools that offer semester-long opportunities with such themes as urban studies, global leadership, environmental science, and cutting-edge innovation and design. It's a good place for independent educational consultants (IECs) to explore the options for their clients. Each school's program is based in a specific setting and students conduct their studies through hands-on activities that take advantage of the unique qualities of that environment.

Most semester schools serve high school juniors, so the time to start exploring opportunities is during sophomore year. Academic deans at most sending schools will work with the programs to ensure that credits apply as needed. Schools also often make arrangements so that families do not pay double tuition—once to the semester school and once to the sending school—for a single semester. Although the programs may offer some need-based financial aid to families, it is limited.

Rigorous Academics and Experiential Learning

Andrew, a recent graduate of The Island School, which is located on a remote island in the Bahamas, reflected on his experience:

It was an incredible journey that shaped who I am as a young adult and exposed me to the scientific and natural world in a way that I had not experienced before. I was also involved in helping the local community, working with kids from the local settlement. The program pushed me academically, intellectually and even physically. Following the program, I was more independent; I was able to keep the college application process in perspective; and,

I am prepared for greater leadership opportunities. The intensive exposure to research and marine biology has enhanced my enthusiasm to pursue this field in college.

Each semester school has its own substantive culminating project. The ability to touch, see, and hear what they are studying ignites a passion for learning that stays with students long after they return to their secondary schools and lasts into college and beyond. Sharing the benefit of her semester at NuVu, where she created a new project every two weeks at The Innovation School at MIT, Kate said:



I learned how to problem solve and work intensely on projects with other people. My projects have been featured at The White House Science Fair and at Boston and NY Fashion Week. I have a strong sense of how creativity fits in with the real world. I most likely would not have had these opportunities had I stayed in a traditional learning environment. Being outside of the traditional educational footprint taught me how to take control of my education. I learned to self-start my days and projects, which has made me much more organized at college. Now I am in my third year of a five-year dual degree program at Brown University and the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD). My concentration at Brown is social entrepreneurship and my major at RISD is industrial design.


Far-Reaching Benefits

Semester schools are beneficial for day school students who want a boarding experience, and they offer boarding school students an opportunity to challenge themselves in a unique environment and focus on a field of study in-depth. Because enrollment is small and the activities require collaboration, they encourage personal responsibility and growth as students dive deeply into passions or perhaps discover new ones and they test

students' resilience academically, intellectually, socioemotionally, and sometimes physically.

The unique experiences can be helpful in the college process. Students return to sending schools refreshed and with a renewed sense of purpose as they head into senior year and the college search. E. Whitney Soule, the dean of admissions and student aid at Bowdoin College, said:

Each year, Bowdoin reviews applications from students who have experienced place-based learning semesters. While we don't always know why a student chooses a particular semester experience away from home, we *do* know that the time living away from home, living in shared space with other student, learning together, serving the local community together, and relying on one another, are exceptionally meaningful because *most* students who experience a semester program of place-based learning choose to either write about it, or talk about it in an interview, or ask those who taught them in those experiences to write recommendations on their behalf. The reflections often focus on facing challenge, learning the balance of relying on oneself *and* seeking help from others, and to appreciate the present time and space. As Bowdoin is a community fundamentally built on the principles of serving the common good, kindness, and intellectual spirit, we appreciate reviewing applicant material from students who are energized from highly intense environment built on the same principles.

Having had first-hand experience with the transformative nature of these programs as a mother and an IEC, I feel strongly that they are worth considering as part of a student's high school journey. 

Holly McGlennon Treat, The Bertram Group, can be reached at holly@thebertramgroup.com.

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Choosing the Right Undergraduate Fit for Future Premed Students

By Deborah Gutman, MPH, MD, IECA (RI)



"I have wanted to be a doctor since I was born." How many independent educational consultants (IECs) or parents have heard these words uttered by a high school student? In today's medical school admissions environment, the path to becoming a doctor is not an easy one. Depending on the road a student takes, he or she will need to complete

approximately 25 years of education. On a road that long, there are likely to be unexpected and frequent changes in direction.

How can you steer your high school clients to an undergraduate experience that will help them explore and build on their interest in medicine? There are four areas that a student and an IEC should evaluate in an undergraduate institution for a future premed:

- Academic climate and culture
- Engagement and opportunity
- Premed/health-related advising
- Cost/benefit ratio.



Academic Climate and Culture

Premed is not a major, it is a set of requirements and recommended courses. The required (or recommended) courses include one year each of general bio with lab, general chem with lab, organic chem with lab, and general physics with lab. In addition, biochemistry, sociology, psychology, English or writing intensive, and math including calculus/statistics are strongly recommended and helpful in preparing for the MCAT (Medical College Admission Test). The average science/math GPA for accepted students now hovers at 3.76, and medical schools calculate a separate BCPM (biology, chemistry, physics, math) GPA, which they expect to be similar to the overall GPA.

The school a premed student chooses must offer excellent science classes. How do you define excellent science classes? Depends on the learner. Ideally, classes should be small and academically challenging (but not too difficult). A student should aim for science courses at a level where they are challenged but can still get an A or B. There should be breadth, depth, and rigor. Preferably class sizes would be small enough to allow student-professor contact.

Questions to ask when evaluating academic culture:

Will there be access to interesting or advanced science courses? Will there be sufficient professor contact for a future letter of recommendation (medical schools require at least one science letter, sometimes two)? Do premed students have the opportunity to diversify their academic interests outside of the sciences or are the premed requirements difficult to schedule? Lastly, what is the premed culture: collaborative or cutthroat? Which one will push your student to achieve?

Engagement and Opportunity

Many medical schools have shifted to holistic admissions. They are looking for students who have pursued experiences and developed attributes that reflect the competencies expected of a future physician. How can a student demonstrate interpersonal

and intrapersonal competencies, such as service orientation, social skills, cultural competence, teamwork, oral communication, integrity and ethics, reliability and dependability, resilience and adaptability, and capacity for improvement?

Typically, those attributes and skills are demonstrated outside of the classroom by engagement in activities that allow development and growth. You want to be sure the school offers a diversity of activities, not just to show up for but that allow for leadership and innovation. Medical schools are looking beyond academic competencies for passion, the x factor, authenticity, and distance traveled. Students want to be able to show commitment and the ability to leave some sort of impact. This is not about passive participation.

How do you evaluate a school for engagement and opportunity?

Is there an active student activities office? More importantly, are there opportunities for community service and leadership? Is there access to physicians and clinical shadowing? Is it facilitated? Are there research

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opportunities for undergraduates that allow active participation and mentoring by the principal investigator (rather than graduate students)? Is there funding for independent research? Are there opportunities to work with underserved and diverse populations? Is there an EMS program or scribe program?

Other opportunities might include an early assurance program (where you can apply to the medical school after sophomore year) or other types of medical school links or an honors program that gives a student priority access to courses and experiences and 1:1 mentorship. But the presence of something like a premed club or fraternity is not the best marker of available opportunities for aspiring health career students. The presence of a BA/MD program does not necessarily mean support for students who are not participants in that program: similar to an honors program, resources are sometimes allocated to the BA/MD students only.

Premed and Health-Related Advising

For most students, there will be many twists and turns on their path to a health-related career. Some students discover that basic science classes are not their strength or that their true interest lies in public health. A good premed advising program should be able to proactively guide a student through the process and ensure their students' success and catch them if they are falling through the cracks.

Ultimately, the best premed school is the school that is the best academic and social fit for each individual student.

Questions to ask about premed advising:

Does the school identify and provide support for students interested in health specialties? When does advising get involved—do they start freshman year with appropriate guidance on course selection? Do they offer academic health for struggling students? Who is providing the health advising—is it a biology professor overwhelmed with the classes or a dedicated educational professional? How extensive are the services: course selection, application services, committee letters, exposure to other health professions? Do they facilitate clinical exposure? Do they offer relevant programs and workshops? Is there alumni support and networking? Keep in mind that admission statistics published by pre-health offices are not an accurate marker of success for every student attending that school. Often schools will publish only the statistics of students they encouraged to apply and do not factor in the data from students they discouraged from applying to medical school.



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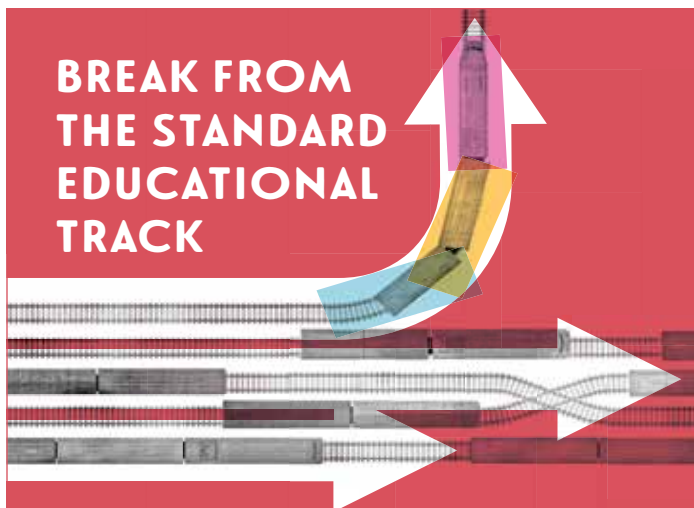
Debt is not an insignificant factor. In 2016 nearly 74% of new medical school graduates had education debt. The AAMC annual survey of medical school students also found that median education debt levels for graduates rose from \$125,372 in 2000 to \$190,000 in 2016. A physician can be in their 30s when they start earning a living wage. It can be difficult to start off with a huge debt burden over your head. You need to factor in the amount of undergraduate debt already accumulated. Job satisfaction seems to inversely correlate with the level of debt. Nobody likes feeling trapped in a specialty or job to pay off massive educational debt.

Best Fit

Ultimately, the best premed school is the school that is the best academic and social fit for each individual student. The undergraduate experience should allow students to get A or B grades in their sciences; adequately prepare them for the MCAT; provide opportunities for research and curiosity; develop their ideas of what it means to be a doctor through healthcare-related experiences; and allow them to build competencies, such as leadership, advocacy, and service through community activities. 🙌

Deborah Gutman, AdmissionsRx, can be reached at admissionsrx@gmail.com.

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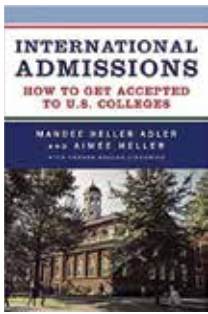


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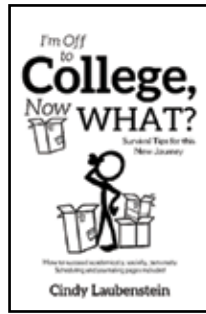
Author's Corner



International Admissions: How to Get Accepted to U.S. Colleges (Biographical Publishing Company, 2017)

By Mandee Heller Adler (FL), Aimee Heller, and Cheree Heller Liebowitz

My company has been working with international students for close to 15 years. Over the years we have seen certain repeat challenges faced by students trying to come the United States for college from countries abroad. This book helps clarify the international admissions process and gives students the best advantage possible for reaching their goals.

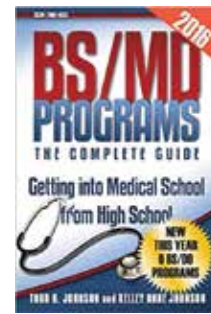


I'm Off to College, Now What? (Lulu Publishing, 2018)

By Cindy Laubenstein (GA)

I wrote this book to help students plan to handle the academic, personal,

and social challenges they'll face during their first year in college. It helps to have already have some mental tools in place to manage their responsibilities and handle unfamiliar situations.



BS/MD Programs—The Complete Guide: Getting into Medical School from High School (College Admission Partners, 2016)

By Todd Johnson,

JD, (MN) and Kelley Anne Johnson, Associate (MN)

We wrote this book to provide reliable information about BS/MD programs to students, their families, and their counselors. It covers all the basic information to empower a student who is considering applying to a program. The book is updated often to provide the most current information.



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Regional Groups

Los Angeles

The Los Angeles group met in June at Marilyn O'Toole's house with 35 IECA members in attendance. Gary Ross, vice president and dean of admission and financial aid at Colgate University, and IECA's Jeff Levy (CA) discussed data. For more information, contact Evelyn Alexander (evelyn@magellancounseling.com).



Beijing

The Beijing group met June 18. They discussed:

- What Chinese families consider when choosing a liberal arts college over more well-known universities and the qualities of Chinese students who are studying at liberal arts colleges.
- Dropping of required standardized testing at University of Chicago and what it could mean for Chinese students in international programs (IB/A-Level) and Chinese students studying in the United States.
- International programs in Beijing and the high-turnover rate of teachers at international schools in China.

For more information about this group, contact Wanning Ding, Associate member, (wanningding.beijing@gmail.com), or Hamilton Gregg (hsgregg45@gmail.com).



Pictured (l to r) are Jack Cao, Hamilton Gregg, Wanning Ding, and Xin Guo.

Send your group news to *Insights* at Insights@IECAonline.com. As you hold events; host speakers; and visit colleges, schools, and programs, don't forget to take photos!

New Jersey

In May, the New Jersey group had a luncheon with Rudyard Favard, assistant director for undergraduate admission at Bentley University.



In June, the group met with Cara Tanenbaum, assistant director of admissions, and Nikki Bruno from Binghamton University. Pictured are Cara Tanenbaum, Jessica Huang, Nikki Bruno, Jill Siegel, Amy Hallock, Traecy Hobson, Carolyn Mulligan, and Julissa Germosen. For more information, please contact Carolyn Mulligan (insidersnetwork@comcast.net).



San Diego

The San Diego group hosted members of the Orange County Regional Group on May 25th for an informative discussion about surprises in this year's admission cycle and whether it will change how we advise students and families for the upcoming admission cycle. For information, please contact Jackie Woolley at summitcollegecounseling.org.



New England

The New England group met in Cambridge in June, attending a morning information session at Harvard University and an afternoon meeting at Signet Education. For more information, please contact Sarah McGinty at sarahemcginty@gmail.com.



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In the News

Mandee Heller Adler (FL) was interviewed for *U.S. News and World Report's* article "What's a Good TOEFL Score?" on June 18.

Heidi Molbak (LA) was interviewed in *Twice-Exceptionality: A Resource Guide for Parents*, a free online guidebook published by Davidson Institute for Talent Development, about how to evaluate school options for the 2e child—those who are both gifted and have a learning disability or emotional struggles—to find the right fit.

Lora Block (VT) was interviewed by local cable TV station GNAT in Manchester for its Life Skills program; she spoke about advising on college student loans, handling student debt, and ways to minimize college debt.

An interview with **Jennifer Ann Aquino** (Singapore) was posted in *Parents' Guide: Asia* on June 20 in which she discussed her book *The International Family Guide to US University Admissions*, a 2018 International Book Award winner.

"Using the Internet Wisely," by **Sandra Moore** (NY), was published in the *Poughkeepsie Journal* on July 2.



Initiatives

Maureen Chang (CA) was honored at the WACAC awards luncheon on June 2 with the 2018 Katy Murphy Service Award, which is given to members who make extraordinary contributions to WACAC over a period of years.

Carolyn Mulligan (NJ) participated in the Bucknell College Admissions Workshop—a 40-year tradition held specifically for children of alumni—on June 28–29. Mulligan (class of 1974) worked alongside Bucknell Admissions staff in break-out sessions for juniors and seniors and also conducted a College Search Crash Course for all juniors.

Missy Evans-Moreland, Associate member (MD), moderated the IEC special interest group at PCACAC's spring conference, one of three special interest group discussions launched there.



IECA member **Larry Blumenstyk** (NJ) facilitated and **Ann Rossbach** (NY), IECA past president, participated on the panel of Counselors & IECs: Smackdown or Kumbaya? at the NJACAC on May 22.



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Introductions

Please Welcome IECA's New Professional Members

Julie Hanna (IL) has been an IEC for five



years and was an Associate member. Previously, she worked in the journalism field as a reporter, writer, and copy editor.

Hanna has a BA in history and an MS in

journalism from Northwestern and attended IECA's 2013 Summer Training Institute. She volunteers on the advisory board for Greenhouse Scholars and is a longtime board member for Culver Legion, the alumni association for Culver Academies (IN).

Hanna is married to John Goodman and has two children, ages 23 and 25, who live in Chicago and New York City.

Julie Hanna

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Specialty: C

Jon Harris (PA), who was an Associate



member, has been an IEC for three years, working primarily with young students from China who want to attend boarding schools in the United States. He has traveled to China

10 times because most of his students live in Beijing or Shanghai. He works closely with **Nancy Liu** (Beijing).

Harris attended Harvard and served for three years in the Marine Corps, after which he began his teaching career at St. George's School and earned a master's in American literature from Wesleyan University during the summers. Harris spent more than 30 years in independent school administration as a dean, principal, head of school, and director of development, most recently at Abington Friends School. He is a member of TABS.

Harris volunteers as a trustee at St. Mark's School, which he attended, and as a trustee for the Squam Lake Association.

His wife, Cynthia, worked as a teacher and administrator at Friends' Central School for nearly 20 years. Their three children are now out of college and pursuing careers in architecture, teaching, and law. His hobbies include playing golf and tennis and a yearly ski trip out West.

Jon Harris, MA

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Specialty: S+I

Tania Heller, (MD), a board-certified



pediatrician, has been an IEC for 4 years and was an Associate member. After practicing clinical medicine in the Washington Metropolitan area for

30 years, she founded and directed the Washington Center for Eating Disorders and Adolescent Obesity.

Heller received her medical degree from the University of Cape Town Medical School/ Groote Schuur Hospital in South Africa and completed her pediatric residency at Georgetown University Medical Center in Washington, DC. She is a member of NACAC and a Fellow of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

She has published five nonfiction books, including *On Becoming a Doctor* (Sourcebooks) and *You and Your Doctor* (McFarland), and coauthored a novel, *35 Years Later*, with her father. In addition to serving as a medical school applicant interviewer, Heller regularly speaks to students who aspire to a career in medicine and to students and physicians at universities and medical centers. She is cochair of the Caring Committee at Congregation B'nai Tzedek and volunteers on the Pediatric Quality Assurance Committee at Suburban Hospital.

Heller was born in South Africa, and now lives, with her husband, Sam, in Bethesda, MD, where they raised their two sons. Her hobbies include reading, writing, jewelry-making, and playing the piano.

Tania Heller, MD

Tania Heller Consulting LLC

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Specialty: G (medicine)

Brad Kerwin (HI) has been an IEC for 40 years. Previously, he was the special advisor to the director as well as the testing coordinator for the Partnerships in Unlimited Educational Opportunities (PUEO) program at Punahou



School. He helped start PUEO, a program that provides summer school classes, small group mentoring, and academic year group activities for local public school students, and he was the Punahou summer school director for 14 years.

Kerwin holds a BA and MA in communication from the University of Hawaii-Manoa as well as an EdD in curriculum and instruction. He is a member of NSLA, NPEA, PSPP, and the College Board. He was a member of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) for nearly 20 years, serving in leadership positions, and is a member of the National Storytelling Committee.

Since 1997, Kerwin has run Dr. K's Balloonatics, a community service group made up of students in grades 5-12 from many schools who make balloon animals and perform magic for nonprofits and charities.

Kerwin was born and raised in Hermosa Beach, CA, in an extended surfing family. He is magician, teaches the craft, and is a member of the Magic Castle in Hollywood. His son Jason is a professor at the University of Minnesota, and his younger son, Adrian, is the president of his educational consulting firm. His wife, Lynda, has been a flight attendant for 40 years with Delta Airlines. They all love to travel!

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drbradk@gmail.com
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Specialties: C, S

Jean Louis (NY) has been an IEC for five years. He is currently a program coordinator at the White Plains Youth Bureau and was an enrollment management officer for the John Jay College of Criminal Justice for nine years.



Louis holds an MS in education with a focus on higher education administration and an MPA. He attended IECA's Transitioning to Private Practice in 2015, serves on IECA's Outreach Committee, and is a member of NACAC.

During New York City College Application Week, Louis volunteers to help NYC public school students with their college applications, and he serves as an essay reader at the Maltz Museum of Jewish Heritage.

Louis is married to Regina and has a son, Philip, who is nine years old. His hobbies include reading, dancing, and playing soccer, and he coaches his son's soccer team.

Jean Louis, MS
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Specialty: C

Michelle McAnaney (ME) has been an IEC for 2 years and was an Associate member. Before becoming an IEC, she was a guidance counselor and educator for more than 15 years, with experience as a director of guidance at two high schools, an adjunct college professor, and a GED tutor.



McAnaney holds a BS in human development from Binghamton University and an EdM in school counseling from SUNY Buffalo. In addition, she recently completed UC-Irvine's certificate program in educational consulting and attended IECA's 2017 Summer Training Institute.

She is an MBTI certified practitioner and an NLP (neuro-linguistic programming) master practitioner as well as a member of NACAC, ACA, and the Association of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Issues in Counseling.

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Specialty: C+LD

Kazue McGregor (CA) has been an IEC for seven years and was an Associate member. Previously, she was the orchestra librarian for the Los Angeles Philharmonic and a professional flutist. She earned a bachelor's degree and a master's degree in flute performance from the University of Southern California. She is a member of AICEP, NACAC, and NCAG.

McGregor is the coauthor of "Building School-wide Commitment: A Westridge School Case Study," in *Diversity Work in Independent Schools: The Practice and The Practitioner* (NAIS, 2013), and the author of "Strength-Based Organization, Communication Pattern and Work Values," in *Insights and Essays On The Music Performance Library* (2012, Meredith Music Publications). She is also past president of the Major Orchestra Librarians Association (MOLA), for which she served as the 2004 Conference Chair, and of the Parent Association at Westridge School for Girls.

McGregor and her husband are classical musicians and raised their two children to believe that the arts are an integral part of life and make a difference in the world.

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Steve Peifer (FL) has been an IEC for five years. His previous positions include vice president of college counseling at KD College Prep, director of college counseling at The King's Academy, and director of college counseling at Rift Valley Academy in Kijabe, Kenya.

Peifer earned a BA from Northern Illinois University and a certificate in college counseling from UCLA extension. He is a member of NACAC and SACAC.

Peifer is the coauthor of *A Dream So Big: Our Unlikely Journey to End the Tears of Hunger* and the founder of Kenya Kids Can, a project of the nonprofit African Inland Mission that provides lunch to more than 20,000 students each day and has built 20 solar computer centers in rural Kenya.

For 14 years, Peifer has volunteered in Kenya, and for that work, he received CNN's Hero Award in 2007 and the NACAC Excellence in Education award in 2010.

Peifer has been married for 33 years to Nancy and is the father of five and grandfather of two. He had his first musical recital at the age of 62.

Stephen Peifer
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steve.peifer@gmail.com
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Specialty: C +I



Margaret Rothe (CA) has been an IEC for 10 years and is the founder of CollegeListPro and CounselMore College Counseling Software Suite. She has had many titles but finds that entrepreneur is the one that rings most true. After 15 years living on campus, serving in every department, she took a sabbatical and began a college counseling business. Within 5 years, she was developing tools for her colleagues.

Rothe holds an MA in higher education and student affairs from the University of Connecticut, Neag School of Education and is a member of NACAC, ACPA, the Association of College & University Housing Officers-International, and WTI.

Rothe is the community representative for a local IEC group in Silicon Valley, CA, called the SilVa Local IECs. In a series of meet ups, IECs present on an area they feel most confident about. The group is now 150 members.

Rothe truly loves her work and considers it her hobby. She is very happy when she is moving the college counseling industry forward.

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On the Road

PNACAC, Gonzaga University, Spokane, WA

Panelists Shannon Bangen and Max Hamberger, Montana State University; Hunter Denson, University of Alabama; and Jackie Christopher, University of Roehampton, joined IECA CEO **Mark Sklarow**, pictured below, for a presentation on how colleges can better engage with IECs. Sklarow also presented a session for counselors who are transitioning to private practice. At the IECA table, **Amanda Fogler**, IECA manager of Member Outreach and Engagement, met with IECs and colleges from Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, and Alaska.



WACAC, Monterey, CA

Local IECA members **Steven Mercer** (CA), **Cyndy McDonald** (CA), and **Allison Lopour** (CA), with IECA CEO **Mark Sklarow**, led two workshops for new independent educational consultants. Sklarow along with **Jeana Kawamura** (CA), and **Jan Kerchner** (CA) also presented about the 10 mega trends transforming independent college consulting to more than 100 attendees. In addition, **Amanda Fogler**, IECA manager of Member Outreach and Engagement coordinated outreach efforts with California member volunteers **Mona Inamdar**, Associate member (CA) Jeana Kawamura, Steven Mercer, **Ethan Sawyer** (CA), and **Jenny Umhofer** (CA).



International ACAC

IECA members gathered in New Orleans, LA, for group photos at the IECA booth in the exhibit hall. Pictured (l to r) are **Juan Camilo Tamayo** (FL & Colombia); **Katja Iuorio** (Italy); **Diala Turk Sinno** (Lebanon); **Amanda Fogler**, IECA manager of Member Outreach and Engagement; and **Julia Gooding** (China). To see more member photos, go to IECA's Facebook page.



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Why I Belong

It All Came Together at STI

By Pamela Pik, MBA, IECA (CT)



After three action-packed days at IECA's 2009 Summer Training Institute (STI), I was sold on becoming an independent college consultant (IEC). I soaked up the knowledge I gained at each workshop I attended, including Working With Recruited Athletes, How to Market Your Business, and Ethics and the IEC.

Every aspect of the business came together for me at STI. I felt that the program and the leaders were primarily focused on the learning aspect, not on selling IECA the organization. Yet when I came home to set up my business and get the word out, I found that I wanted to stay in touch with the peers I had met. Joining IECA has been a way to keep that professional network going. I still look for those 2009 STI classmates at conferences and on college tours and have met other IECA members in the time since. We catch up on both the professional and personal aspects of our lives.

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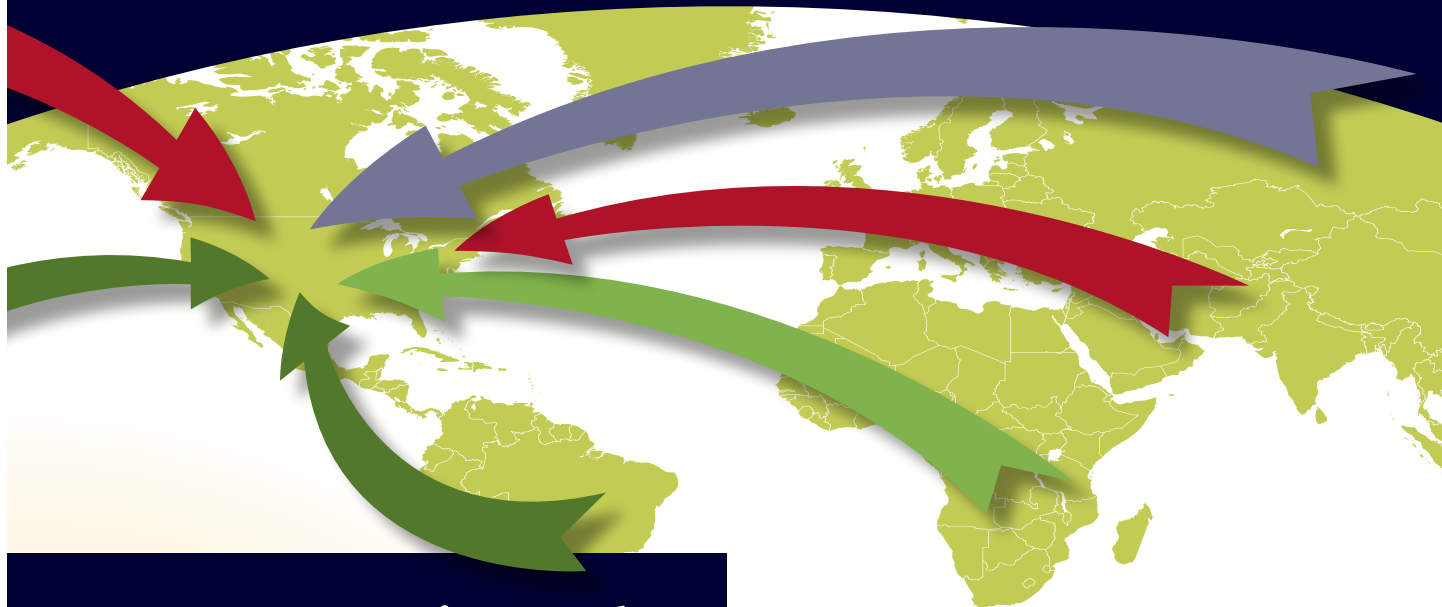
IECA stands out as an organization that wants to make an impact on the college admissions landscape. Association staff and IECs have been quoted in newspapers and advocated change in institutions, such as the Common App. IECA is purposeful in keeping at the forefront of trends while remaining strong in its values. In other words, IECA values its reputation in the IEC world. I also feel fortunate to belong to a regional IECA group, with over 60 members. This smaller group is another great resource for sharing information as well as attending organized college tours in my state.

In summary, I belong to IECA because I believe that the other members and the professional resources it provides make me a well-informed college consultant and give me high-quality tools to help the families with whom I work.

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International Students in the United States

1,158,000 (In thousands)

- 439** Undergraduates
- 391** Graduate
- 173** Optional practical training
- 82** Secondary
- 73** Nondegree programs

Top 3 majors:

- Engineering
- Business & Management
- Math & Computer Science

Universities with more than 10,000 students:

NYU	17,326
USC	14,327
Columbia	14,096
Northeastern	13,201
ASU	13,164
U of IL	12,454
UCLA	12,199
Purdue	11,288

Percent increase in enrollment from previous year

2012	+5.7%
2013	+7.2%
2014	+8.1%
2015	+10.0%
2016	+7.1%*
2017	+3.4%**

** The 2016 drop has been widely blamed on the tone of the 2016 presidential campaign.*

*** The more-significant drop in 2017 is credited to tone of current immigration policy and crackdown as well as the fear of gun violence.*